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Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Budget Testimony

Thank you Senator Osten and Representative Ryan. My name is Evangeline Sargent and I am from Norwich. I am submitting testimony today regarding the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Budget. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services needs every single penny it can get.

This budget doesn't just fund the Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs), such as Southeastern Mental Health Authority or Capitol Region Mental Center, and their programs. The budget also funds numerous non-profits, Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs), and so much more.

When the DMHAS Budget gets cut, providers have to make difficult decisions. How to keep providing services and try to not affect their clients. Non-profits already work on a shoestring budget. Making the extremely cost effective agencies providing some of the best services out there work with even less money makes no sense at all. They should be getting more money so they can show their hard working employees some appreciation and give them a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and/or expand their services.

I am one of the people that would not be alive if it were not for DMHAS. I received services from both a LMHA and local Non-profit. I can tell you that I received better service from the Non-profit. As for the LMHA, there is basically one person that kept me going. Yes others at the LMHA cared, but not like the non-profit. When it comes to the Non-profit, it doesn't come down to any one person. It comes down to the whole place. They cared then, now, and always will. Even the CEO stops to talk with you. I have seen that other non-profits for Mental Health care like this too. You are no: a number. As a recap, non-profits are extremely cost effective with the bonus of making one feel like a person, plus the employees are caring. This is coming from one who has first hand experience. Please give Non-profits the money they deserve. You won't regret the decision.

Thank you for your time.

Evangeline Sargent